

Table of Contents

CONSERVATION RECORDS

The worksheets contained in the Conservation Records will help you assemble information needed to begin the conservation planning process.

Introduction: Developing Your Conservation Plan	2
Producer Information	4
Property Location Map.....	5
Property Location Information.....	6
Conservation Farm Map.....	7
Resource Concerns	8
Evaluation and Resource Inventory Checklist.....	9
Producer Objectives	12
Privacy Act	14

SUPPLEMENTAL SECTIONS

Additional sections of the Conservation Records are available to help you record more detailed information about your farm or ranch.

- **Cropland Inventory** (includes: hay land, orchards, vineyards, Christmas trees, and berries)
- **Feedlot and Dairy Inventory**
- **Grazed Land Inventory**
- **Forest Land Inventory**
- **Irrigation System Description**

Developing Your Conservation Plan

Your Conservation Records and Your Conservation Plan

This Conservation Records packet will help you prepare and document the information needed to develop a Conservation Plan for your operation. Completing the Conservation Records packet and developing a Conservation Plan are voluntary actions that you can take to prepare information needed to apply for conservation programs through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

This voluntary Conservation Record addresses all land uses: cropland, pasture land, hay land, forest land, wildlife land, range land and headquarters (feedlots and dairies). The Conservation Record can also be used for both large and small farms.

Once you complete your Conservation Records, a planner with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can then help you develop a Conservation Plan. A Conservation Plan is a tool to help you meet your goals for optimal production and sustainability on your operation. A Conservation Plan is a dynamic and confidential document. Developing a Conservation Plan is a voluntary process. You make the decisions, and ultimately, you are responsible for implementing your plan. A Conservation Plan does not provide public access to your property. You retain control of the rights of entry and use.

Your Conservation Plan and your Conservation Records are confidential, and no person or agency other than NRCS has access to them without your written authorization.

Before you complete the forms in this packet, it is important that you read the information on the following page. This outlines the conservation planning process that you and an NRCS conservation planner will use to complete your Conservation Plan. The information you develop throughout this packet are the building blocks needed to begin the planning process. Once your Conservation Plan is developed, NRCS planners can then provide you with technical assistance to develop and implement your plan.

Benefits of a Conservation Plan

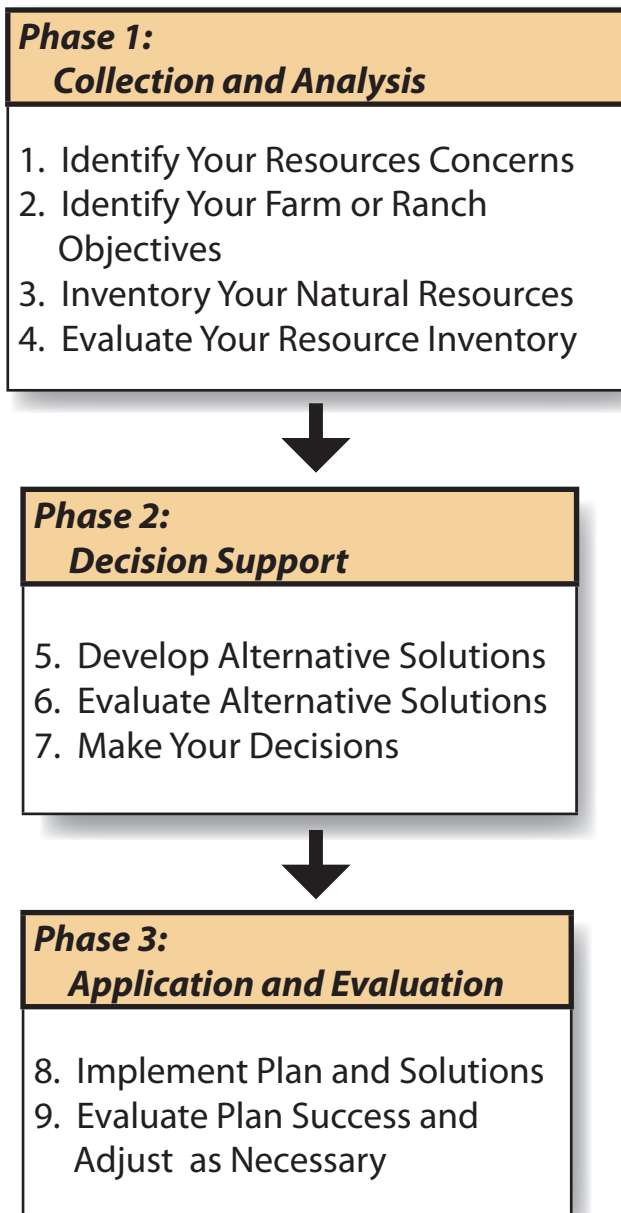
- **Saves your money long term**
- **Increases your land's productivity**
- **Helps you comply with current and future environmental regulations**
- **Sustains the natural resources on your land**
- **Increases your property value**
- **Saves time and labor**

Developing Your Conservation Plan

The Conservation Planning Process

The conservation planning process should address your resource concerns and also meet your personal needs. Writing your Conservation Plan is a nine-step process that consists of three phases. The information you develop in the Conservation Records packet will complete Phase 1 of the planning process. The worksheets you complete can then be utilized by you and your local conservation planner to complete Phases 2 and 3. The description below outlines the conservation planning process.

Conservation Planning Process



Completing Your Conservation Records

This packet of information contains sections you can tailor to fit your operation. The first section includes general information to describe your operation, establish the condition of your natural resources, and identify your objectives for your operation. The next five sections are divided into specific land uses and activities:

- Cropland Inventory
- Grazed Land Inventory
- Forest Land Inventory
- Feedlots and Dairy Inventory
- Irrigation System Description

Complete only the sections that are relevant to your operation. It is not necessary to fill out any additional sections of the Conservation Records packet that do not pertain to your operation. The packet includes a number of worksheets to help you organize your information. Each worksheet includes a completed example followed by a blank worksheet for you to fill out.

Continuing the Planning Process

Once you have identified and completed the sections of the Conservation Records packet that relate to your operation, decide whether you want to seek further NRCS assistance. If you are ready to continue the planning process, please complete and sign the Privacy Statement located on pages 14 and 15. If you have any questions about the Conservation Records or if you are ready to continue with Phase 2 of the conservation planning process, contact your local NRCS office.

Producer Information

The following information is needed by your conservation planner to develop a quality Conservation Plan. The NRCS Privacy Statement is available for you to fill out on pages 14 and 15. The Privacy Statement ensures that the information you provide in the Conservation Records packet remains confidential between you and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Name of Landowner(s)			
Name of Land Manager(s)			
Business or Farm Name			
Address			
City		State	
County		Zip Code	
Phone Numbers	Home		
	Business		
	Cell		
E-mail Address			

Property Location Map

On this page, please draw or attach a map showing directions to your farm in relation to well-known features (highways, towns). On the following page, draw or attach a detailed map of your farm or ranch operation (field boundaries, access roads, streams, etc.). Include the location of conservation practices (fences, terraces, pipelines, etc.) you have installed on each field. Attach additional pages if necessary.

Property Location Map



Property Location Information

In order to identify the property location, please refer to the example and complete the table below. Your farm number, field number(s), and total acres can be located on an aerial map. Aerial map photocopies of your property can be obtained at your local US Department of Agriculture Service Center. Township, range, and section numbers can be located with the following resources: county soil survey book, 7.5 min. quad map (can be found at a bookstore or sporting goods store), tax lot number from the county courthouse, deed of land, and the local irrigation district.

EXAMPLE

Property Location Information

Property Name/ Number	Field Name/ Number	Township	Range	Section(s)	Acres	Land Type	Own	Lease
Jones Farm	1	135	3E	21	30	State		✓
Jones Farm	2	135	3E	21	10	Federal		✓
Jones Farm	3	135	3E	22	80	Private		✓
Smith Farm	1	135	3E	22	120	Private	✓	
Smith Farm	2	135	3E	22	95	Private	✓	
Smith Farm	HQ	135	3E	22	5	Private	✓	

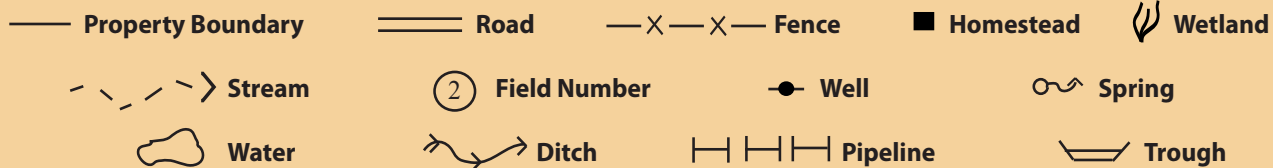
Property Location Information

Property Name/ Number	Field Name/ Number	Town- ship	Range	Section(s)	Acres	Land Type	Own	Lease

Conservation Farm Map

Natural Resources Conservation Service 

Farm Map Legend



Label Land Uses in
Designated Fields



Resource Concerns

Instructions

The first step of the planning process is to identify the condition of your operation's natural resources. In order to efficiently catalog the condition of all of your resources, an **Evaluation and Resource Inventory Checklist** is provided. This worksheet will walk you through seven categories to inventory your operation's natural resources. These categories include: soil erosion, soil condition, water quantity, water quality, air, plants and animals. Located below is an example of a completed checklist. The worksheet for you to fill out is located on the next three pages.

The following are the steps to complete the **Evaluation and Resource Inventory Checklist**:

- 1) For your convenience use the land use abbreviations found in the box below to identify your primary land uses; you may use more than one land use. Enter your land categories directly under the **Land Use Category** column heading.
- 2) Next, place a check mark in the boxes that identify the resource concerns that correspond with your identified land uses. You may check more than one land use for a particular resource concern. This indicates that, yes, the resource concern occurs with the selected land uses.
- 3) After identifying the resource concern and land use, continue to the **Notes** column and write the field number to indicate where the concern occurs with a brief description of that concern.
- 4) Please check the last box if the identified resource concern is one you would like to address.
- 5) Continue this process through each of the six categories mentioned above.

Land Use Category Abbreviations:

C = Crop, F = Forest, GF = Grazed Forest, GR = Grazed Range, N = Native Pasture, NA = Natural Area, R = Recreation, U = Urban, W = Water, WL = Wildlife, H = Headquarters (feedlots and dairies)

EXAMPLE

Evaluation and Resource Inventory Checklist

Resource Concern	Description of Resource Concern	Land Use Category					Notes	Address Concern?
		C	H					
SOIL EROSION								
Sheet & Rill Erosion	Rain or melting snow causes soil movement.							
Wind Erosion	Wind causes soil movement.	✓					During early spring, fields 4, 5 & 6 get severe wind damage caused by blowing sand.	✓
Ephemeral Gully Erosion	Runoff forms small channels that can be obscured by heavy tillage.		✓					
Classic Gully Erosion	Runoff causes deep, permanent channels.		✓				Gully in Field 9 continues to headcut.	
Streambank Erosion	Accelerated loss of stream bank soils restricts land and water use and management.	✓					Bank of stream through Field 10 cutting back.	✓

Evaluation and Resource Inventory Checklist - 1 of 3

Natural Resources Conservation Service



Resource Concern	Description of Resource Concern	Land Use Category					Notes	Address Concern?
SOIL EROSION								
Sheet & Rill Erosion	Rain or melting snow causes soil movement.							
Wind Erosion	Wind causes soil movement.							
Ephemeral Gully	Runoff forms small channels that can be obscured by heavy tillage.							
Classic Gully Erosion	Runoff causes deep, permanent channels.							
Streambank Erosion	Accelerated loss of stream bank soils restricts land and water use and management.							
Road Erosion	Erosion occurs on access roads.							
Irrigation Induced Erosion	Improper application of irrigation water causes soil erosion.							
SOIL CONDITION								
Organic Matter Depletion	Soil organic matter has decreased.							
Soil Compaction	Soil compaction reduces infiltration and plant growth.							
Contaminants - Animal Waste & Organics	Over-application of animal waste and other organics degrades plant health and vigor or exceeds the soil capacity to retain nutrients.							
Damage from Soil Deposition	Sediment deposits restrict land use or harm ecological processes.							
WATER QUANTITY								
Excessive Seepage	Water that seeps onto the surface restricts land use.							
Excessive Runoff, Flooding, or Ponding	Flooding or ponding restricts land use.							
Excessive Subsurface Water	Saturated soil restricts land use.							
Inadequate Outlets	Water outlets are too small to remove excess water in a timely manner.							
Inefficient Water Use on Irrigated Land	Use of irrigation water is not optimal.							
Reduced Capacity of Conveyances by Sediment Deposition	Sediment in ditches, canals, culverts, etc. reduce the desired flow capacity.							
Reduced Storage of Water Bodies by Sediment Accumulation	Sediment deposits in ponds, lakes, etc. reduce the desired volume capacity.							
Aquifer Overdraft	Groundwater withdrawals exceed recharge rates.							
Insufficient Flows in Water Courses	Water flows are insufficient to support ecological processes/land use management.							

Evaluation and Resource Inventory Checklist - 2 of 3

Resource Concern	Description of Resource Concerns	Land Use Category						Notes	Address Concern?
WATER QUALITY - GROUND WATER CONTAMINANTS									
Pesticides	Pesticide residues degrade groundwater quality.								
Nutrients & Animal Waste	Excess nutrients degrade groundwater quality.								
Salinity	Excess salts degrade groundwater quality.								
Other	Other contaminants may include heavy metals, pathogens and petroleum. Please describe in Notes section.								
WATER QUALITY - SURFACE WATER CONTAMINANTS									
Pesticides	Pesticides degrade surface water quality.								
Nutrient & Animal Waste	Excess nutrients degrade surface water quality.								
Suspended Sediments/ Turbidity	Sediment degrades surface water quality.								
Temperature	Undesired temperature degrades surface water quality.								
Other	Other contaminants may include: salinity, heavy metals, pathogens, and petroleum. Please describe in Notes section.								
AIR									
Airborne Sediment	Particulate matter in the air causes health hazards to humans and animals.								
Chemical Drift	Pesticide drift contaminates or injures non-targeted fields, crops, soils, water, animals and humans.								
Objectionable Odors	Land use operations produce offensive smells.								
Reduced Visibility	Sight distance is reduced due to airborne particles.								
Other	Other air concerns may include ammonia, air temperature or movement, excessive carbon dioxide. Please describe in Notes section.								

1. Are there any known historic or pre-historic sites on your property? If yes, please describe.

Evaluation and Resource Inventory Checklist - 3 of 3

Natural Resources Conservation Service



Resource Concern	Description of Resource Concern	Land Use Category					Notes	Address Concern?
PLANTS								
Plants Not Suited	Plants are not suited to site conditions or objectives.							
Productivity, Health & Vigor	Plants do not produce the yields, quality, and soil cover to meet objectives.							
Threatened or Endangered Species	One or more plant species are in danger of extinction.							
Noxious & Invasive Plants	The site has noxious or invasive plants present.							
Forage Quality & Palatability	Plants do not have adequate nutritional value or palatability for the intended use.							
Wildfire Hazard	Fuel loading (plant biomass) poses a wildfire risk to human safety, structures, and resources.							
FISH AND WILDLIFE							* List species of concern in notes.	
Inadequate Food	Food is inadequate to meet the requirements of fish and wildlife.							
Inadequate Cover/Shelter	Wildlife cover is inadequate. For aquatic species, this includes lack of hiding, thermal, and/or refuge cover.							
Inadequate Water	The quantity and quality of water is unacceptable for fish and wildlife.							
Inadequate Space	Inadequate space to meet the lifestyle needs of fish and wildlife.							
Imbalance Among & Within Populations	Populations lack balance with available quantities and qualities of food, cover/shelter, water, space and other life history requirements.							
Threatened & Endangered Species	*One or more species or their habitat are in danger of extinction.							
DOMESTICATED ANIMALS								
Inadequate Quantity & Quality of Feed & Forage	Feed and forage is insufficient to meet the nutritional and production needs for livestock.							
Inadequate Shelter	Shelter is inadequate to meet the production goals for livestock.							
Inadequate Stock Water	Drinking water is insufficient (amount & distribution) to meet the production goals for livestock.							
Stress & Mortality	Animals exhibit illness or death from disease, parasites, insects, poisonous plants, or other factors.							

Producer Objectives

Clear and focused objectives are one of the most important components of the planning process. Once your objectives are laid out on paper, you and your local conservation planner will be better able to develop a Conservation Plan that is right for you and your operation. In turn, having a Conservation Plan with clearly identified objectives will help you focus your resources and save time.

An objective is operational and tells specifically what you want to accomplish with your Conservation Plan. Objectives are measurable. Goals, on the other hand, are broad statements of what you hope to accomplish and are usually not measurable. For objectives to help you achieve positive outcomes, you must clearly state the changes you want to make on your land and the desired outcomes. You must also identify small, achievable action items that you can accomplish within a defined time frame. Use the form below or another sheet of paper to write down your objectives.

Producer Objectives

What is your overall goal for your property? (example: primary income, hobby, wildlife, etc.)
What would you like your operation to look like in five to ten years?
Natural Resource Objectives
Consider each land use and your overall goal when identifying your objectives.
Short Term:
Long Term:

Producer Objectives

Natural Resources Conservation Service



Production and Economic Objectives

Short Term:

Long Term:

Quality of Life Objectives

Short Term:

Long Term:

Additional Notes:

Privacy Act

Privacy Act Statement for NRCS Conservation Program Applications

Your Conservation Records and your Conservation Plan are confidential. According to the Privacy Act, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) **cannot** share the information you provide in your Conservation Records and your Conservation Plan with other individuals or agencies without your written permission. The form below gives your consent to release information only to defined groups or individuals when necessary to process NRCS program applications.

Producer Name: _____

In order to process your program application, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) employees, directors and board members while acting for NRCS may be required to release a minimum amount of your personal information. This release of information will only be in the course of processing the application, and will only consist of the information stated below. It will only be released to the person(s) listed below.

Disclosure of information by you is voluntary. Failure to provide information requested on this form may result in the government's inability to determine your suitability for the program for which you are applying. Please read the information form carefully, then sign and date where indicated.

☐ **Do not release any of my application information.**

☐ **NRCS has my permission to release the following information:**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Other Information: _____

☐ **NRCS has my permission to release the above information in the following situations:**

☐ Soil and Water Conservation District open meetings and minutes from the meeting

☐ Other Situations or Persons _____

Privacy Act of 1974 Compliance Information: Solicitation of information contained herein is authorized by Executive Order 10450, and/or Section 231 of the Crime Control Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13041), and may be used as a basis for suitability determinations. Information may be transferred as a routine use to appropriate federal, state or local agencies when relevant to the issuance of a license, grant, or approval for participation in a conservation program.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD.) USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Authorization and Release: I hereby authorize the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to release certain information contained in the enclosed application. The information released will only be information needed to process my application. I have been informed of my rights under the Privacy Act of 1974 and the protection of my personal information under USDA NRCS General Manual Part 408.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Privacy Act

Authorization for NRCS Release of Conservation Plan File Information

This form allows us to share specific information in your Conservation Plan with other agencies. By signing this form, NRCS has the ability to make sure that you and NRCS both comply with the following laws: the Endangered Species Act, Wetland Reserve Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and the Clean Water Act.

If you do not sign this form, we are unable to provide you any technical or financial assistance for new conservation practices or activities.

Authorization for NRCS Release of Conservation Plan File Information

Persons receiving Federal funding or final designs/specifications through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to implement conservation projects are required to comply with all Federal, State, and local laws, as well as obtain any required Federal, State, or local permits prior to construction of the project. In order to ensure compliance with Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), NRCS is required to consult with US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – Fisheries [formerly referred to as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)] if we determine our actions will affect Threatened or Endangered species or their habitat. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires NRCS to cooperate with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (Advisory Council).

I, _____, have control of said project and/or property, and give my consent for NRCS to consult with and/or release pertinent information from my project or construction plans relating to said consultation with the USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, Advisory Council, and SHPO to ensure compliance with ESA, MSA, and NHPA. This does not authorize access to my private property by non-NRCS agencies, groups or individuals.

I, _____, have control of said project and/or property and choose **not** to give my consent for NRCS to consult with and/or release pertinent information from my project or construction plan relating to said consultation with the USFWS, NOAA Fisheries, Advisory Council, and SHPO to ensure compliance with ESA, MSA, and NHPA.

If you choose not to give your consent, you may work directly with these agencies when the need arises and provide assurance of ESA, MSA and NHPA compliance to the NRCS prior to implementation of your planned project. NRCS will provide you no further assistance until the consultation process has been completed.

Note: Failure to provide consent may affect your eligibility to receive USDA funding for your project. You may cancel this consent by written notice.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

